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CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of configuring a hard copy output engine comprising:
receiving an electronic message including configuration data; and
configuring the hard copy output engine using the configuration data.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the electronic message comprises receiving an email at the hard copy output engine and wherein configuring comprises configuring the hard copy output engine via an embedded web server contained in the hard copy output engine using the configuration data.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the electronic message comprises receiving an email through a firewall.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the electronic message comprises:
receiving an email through a firewall at a first user station; and
forwarding the email to the hard copy output engine.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the electronic message comprises receiving an XML script and configuring includes setting a threshold for an element chosen from a group consisting of: pigmentation material, marking material, number of hours of operation and number of sheets of print media consumed.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the hard copy output engine is chosen from a group consisting of: facsimile machines, photocopiers and printers.

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7. The method of claim 1, wherein the configuration data include data prepared by:

- determining a make and model for the hard copy output engine;
- determining a serial number for the hard copy output engine; and
- determining user thresholds for consumables associated with the hard copy output engine.

8. A computer instruction signal embodied in a carrier wave carrying instructions that when executed by a processor cause the processor to:

- receive an electronic message including configuration data; and
- configure the hard copy output engine using the configuration data.

9. The computer instruction signal of claim 8, wherein the computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to receive an electronic message includes a computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to receive an email at the hard copy output engine, and wherein the computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to configure comprises a computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine via an embedded web server contained in the hard copy output engine using the configuration data.

10. The computer instruction signal of claim 8, wherein the computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to receive an electronic message includes a computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to receive an email through a firewall.

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11. The computer instruction signal of claim 8, wherein the computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to receive an electronic message includes a computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to:

- receive an email through a firewall at a first user station; and
- forward the email to the hard copy output engine.

12. The computer instruction signal of claim 8, wherein the computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine includes a computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine via the embedded web server to set a threshold for an element chosen from a group consisting of: pigmentation material, marking material, number of hours of operation and number of sheets of print media consumed.

13. The computer instruction signal of claim 8, wherein the computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to receive an electronic message includes a computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to receive an XML script, and wherein the computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine includes a computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to configure a hard copy output engine chosen from a group consisting of: facsimile machines, photocopiers and printers.

14. A computer implemented control system for a hard copy output engine, the system comprising:

- memory configured to store a software module; and
- processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to:
 - receive an electronic message including configuration data; and
 - configure the hard copy output engine using the configuration data.

15. The computer implemented control system of claim 14, wherein the processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to receive an electronic message comprises processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to receive an email at the hard copy output engine, and wherein the processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to configure the hard copy output engine comprises processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to configure the hard copy output engine via an embedded web server contained in the hard copy output engine.

16. The computer implemented control system of claim 14, wherein the processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to receive an electronic message comprises processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to receive an email through a firewall.

17. The computer implemented control system of claim 14, wherein the processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to receive an electronic message comprises processing circuitry configured to:

receive an email through a firewall at a first user station; and
forward the email to the hard copy output engine.

18. The computer implemented control system of claim 14, wherein the processing circuitry configured to receive an electronic message comprises processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to receive an XML script.

19. The computer implemented control system of claim 14, wherein the hard copy output engine is chosen from a group consisting of: facsimile machines, photocopiers and printers.

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20. The computer implemented control system of claim 14, wherein the processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to configure the hard copy output engine comprises processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to configure the hard copy output engine via the embedded web server to set a threshold for an element chosen from a group consisting of: pigmentation material, marking material, number of hours of operation and number of sheets of print media consumed.

21. An article of manufacture comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable code embodied therein that is configured to cause a processor to:

receive an electronic message including configuration data; and
configure the hard copy output engine using the configuration data.

22. The article of manufacture of claim 21, wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor to receive an electronic message includes computer readable code configured to cause the processor to receive an email at the hard copy output engine, and wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine includes computer readable code configured to cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine via an embedded web server contained in the hard copy output engine using the configuration data.

23. The article of manufacture of claim 21, wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor to receive an electronic message includes computer readable code configured to cause the processor to receive an email through a firewall.

24. The article of manufacture of claim 21, wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor to receive an electronic message includes computer readable code configured to cause the processor to:
receive an email through a firewall at a first user station; and
forward the email to the hard copy output engine.

25. The article of manufacture of claim 21, wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine includes computer readable code configured to cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine via the embedded web server to set a threshold for an element chosen from a group consisting of: pigmentation material, number of hours of operation and number of sheets of print media consumed.

26. The article of manufacture of claim 21, wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor to receive an electronic message includes computer readable code configured to cause the processor to receive an XML script, and wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine includes computer readable code configured to cause the processor to configure a hard copy output engine chosen from a group consisting of: facsimile machines, photocopiers and printers.

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